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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/23/2033

TAGS: PARM PREL ETTC MTCRE KSCA IR FR GM
SUBJECT: IRAN'S UAV PROGRAM SEEKING GERMAN-ORIGIN ENGINES
VIA FRENCH INTERMEDIARY (S)

REF: A. 06 STATE 19038

- IB. 06 STATE 78595
- IC. 06 STATE 190812
- ID. 06 BERLIN 3380
- IE. 07 STATE 21966
- IF. 07 BERLIN 1312
- IG. STATE 50301
- IH. BERLIN 631
- II. STATE 118936
- IJ. BERLIN 1535

Classified By: ISN/MTR DIRECTOR PAM DURHAM FOR REASONS 1.4 (B), (D).

¶11. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 5.

¶12. (S) We want to inform French authorities that as of mid-November 2008, a procurement official affiliated with Iran's unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) program was seeking German-origin engines via the French intermediary Technical Assistance and Financial Services SA (TAFS SA). We understand that a TAFS SA representative named Tofighi was involved in these negotiations. While the particular engines being sought are not controlled by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), they have been used in other countries' UAV systems (e.g., South Africa's Seeker and Israel's Searcher). We have discussed the Iranian UAV program previously with France and our other MTCR Partners (Refs A & B), noting that it uses several names, including Fan Pardazan and Ghoods Aviation (or Aeronautics) Industries (an entity designated United Nations Security Council Resolution 1747). We cannot exclude the possibility that it might be using additional aliases in order to disguise its identity from export officials in potential supplier countries, including France.

¶13. (S) Additional background for post only: We have held previous discussions with German officials related to efforts by Iran's UAV program to acquire Limbach L550E engines via middlemen in the Netherlands, Taiwan and the United Arab Emirates (Refs C & J) and we will discuss this latest information with Germany as well.

¶14. (S) Objectives: We want to share this information with French officials and urge them to investigate and take all appropriate measures to ensure that TAFS SA is not engaging in the export of sensitive materials to entities of proliferation concern in Iran.

¶15. (U) Action Request: Department requests Embassy Paris approach appropriate host government officials to deliver talking points in paragraph 6. Talking points can be left as a non-paper.

¶16. (S) Begin talking points/non-paper:

(SECRET//REL FRANCE)

-- The United States greatly appreciates France's leadership of and support for international efforts to advance nonproliferation.

-- In the spirit of our nonproliferation partnership, we would like to raise with you a matter of proliferation concern and request your government's assistance in investigating this activity.

-- We understand that in mid-November 2008, a foreign commercial manager for Iran's unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) program expressed interest in acquiring German-origin Limbach L550E engines from the French firm Technical Assistance and Financial Services SA (TAFS SA).

-- The foreign commercial manager may have been dealing with a TAFS SA employee named Tofighi.

-- Although the Limbach L550E engine is not controlled by the MTCR, it is suitable for use in UAVs (and is used by South Africa's Seeker and Israel's Searcher UAVs, for example).

-- As we have discussed with you and the other MTCR Partners, the Iranian UAV program is known by several names, including Ghoods Aviation (or Aeronautics) Industries and Fan Pardazan.

-- Ghoods is designated under UN Security Council Resolution 1747 for its affiliation with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

-- However, we cannot exclude the possibility that additional alternate names could be used by Iran's UAV program to acquire these engines through TAFS SA.

-- As you are aware, Iran's UAV program employs these various names in its procurement efforts in order to disguise its identity from export officials in potential supplier countries.

-- We encourage you to investigate this information and to take all appropriate measures to ensure that French-based firms are not acting as suppliers of sensitive items to Iranian entities of proliferation concern.

-- We know France shares a similar strong commitment to nonproliferation and will take the necessary steps to prevent exports that could contribute to missile proliferation.

-- We also plan to bring this activity to the attention of German officials.

¶7. (U) Please contact ISN/MTR's John Paul Herrmann with any questions or follow-up related to this case (202-647-1430 - herrmannjp2@state.gov or herrmannjp@state.sgov.gov) and slug reporting on this issue for ISN/MTR, EUR/WE, and EUR/PRA.

¶8. (U) A Word version file of this document will be posted at www.state.sgov.gov/demarche.
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